UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.241/57
13 May 1996

Original : ENGLISH

INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR
THE ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES
EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR
DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA
Ninth session
New York, 3-13 September 1996
Agenda item 2

ORGANIZATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION

Note by the Secretariat

Introduction

The present document was prepared in accordance with INCD decision 8/6, which requested the Secretariat to prepare, for the ninth session,

(i) a revised draft decision on the terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) reflecting deliberations at the eighth session, and

(ii) draft decisions on the roster of independent experts and on ad hoc panels, based on comments and suggestions made at the eighth session and on any further views communicated by INCD members to the Secretariat, in writing, by 15 April 1996.

Consistent with the Committee's decision, the document is divided in three sections. Section one contains the draft decision on, and revised draft terms of reference of, the CST. Section two contains a draft decision on the roster of independent experts. Finally, section three contains a draft decision on ad hoc panels.

GE.96-61556

96-19988

SECTION ONE

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

I. DRAFT RECOMMENDATION TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee,

Recalling its mandate to prepare for the first session of the Conference of the Parties pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/234, of 23 December 1994,

Recommends that the Conference of the Parties, at its first session, adopt the following decision:

Terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling article 24, paragraph 1, of the Convention, which provides that the Conference of the Parties shall decide, at its first session, on the terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology,

Recalling also article 22, paragraph (2) (h), of the Convention, which provides that the Conference of the Parties shall, as appropriate, seek the cooperation of, and utilize the services of and information provided by, competent bodies or agencies, whether national or international, intergovernmental or non-governmental,

Having reviewed the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on the terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology,

Decides to adopt the terms of reference attached to the present decision.

II. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Introduction

1. In accordance with the provisions of the Convention, the Committee on Science and Technology (the "Committee") is a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties. The role of the Committee is to provide the Conference of the Parties with information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought to ensure that its decisions are based on the most up-to-date scientific knowledge.

Functions

2. Consistent with the provisions of the Convention, particularly its articles 16 to 18 and 24, and at the request of the Conference of the Parties, the functions of the Committee include the following.

(a) Advisory functions

(i) Provide scientific and technological information needed to implement the Convention

(ii) [Monitor, and assess the impact of,] developments in science and technology and give advice on the possible utilization of such developments for the implementation of the Convention

(iii) Advise the Conference of the Parties on the possible implications of the evolution of scientific and technological knowledge for programmes and activities under the Convention, particularly in connection with the review of implementation pursuant to paragraph 22 (2) (a) of the Convention

(iv) Advise on possible research priorities for particular regions and sub-regions, reflecting different local conditions

(v) Make recommendations on the establishment of ad hoc panels, including issues relating to the terms of reference, composition and modalities of work of the panels

(vi) Advise on the structure, membership and maintenance of the roster of independent experts bearing in mind the recognition in the Convention of local knowledge and expertise

(b) Data and information functions

(i) Make recommendations regarding the collection, analysis and exchange of data and information to ensure systematic observation of land degradation in affected areas and assess the processes and effects of drought and desertification

(ii) Make recommendations on pertinent, quantifiable and verifiable indicators which might be used in connection with action programmes

(c) Research and review functions

(i) Make recommendations regarding specialized research on scientific and technological tools necessary to implement the Convention and on evaluation of the results of such research

(ii) Identify, as appropriate, new scientific and technological approaches with particular reference to multidisciplinary aspects of combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought

(iii) Make recommendations for promoting co-operative and comparative research between regions with different cultural and socio-economic circumstances

(iv) Make recommendations for promoting participative research on relevant traditional and local technology, knowledge, know-how and practices to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought through, *inter alia*, the utilization of information and services provided by local populations and other competent bodies, including intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

(d) Functions related to technology

(i) Make recommendations on ways and means to identify and use technology, knowledge, know-how and practices relevant to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought

(ii) Make recommendations on ways and means to exchange information regarding technology, knowledge, know-how and practices, including through the network referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4

(e) Evaluation functions

(i) Monitor the application of science and technology to research projects relating to the implementation of the Convention and report to the Conference of the Parties

(ii) Examine the scientific and technological relevance and feasibility of research conducted pursuant to action programmes under the Convention

Networking of institutions, agencies and bodies

3. In accordance with article 25 of the Convention, the Committee shall, under the supervision of the Conference of the Parties, make provision for the undertaking of a survey and evaluation of the relevant existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies willing to become units of a network to support the implementation of the Convention.

4. On the basis of the results of the survey and evaluation referred to in paragraph 3, the Committee shall make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties on ways and means to facilitate and strengthen networking of the units at the local, national and other levels, with a view to ensuring that the thematic needs set out in articles 16 to 19 of the Convention are addressed.

Composition and Bureau

5. The Committee shall be multidisciplinary and open to the participation of all Parties. It shall be composed of government representatives competent in fields of expertise relevant to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.

6. [The Committee shall elect four Vice-Chairpersons, one of which shall act as Rapporteur. Together with the Chairperson, elected by the Conference of the Parties in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure, they shall constitute the Bureau. The Vice-Chairpersons shall be elected from among the experts present at the session with due regard to the need to ensure equitable geographical distribution and adequate representation of affected country Parties, particularly those in Africa. They shall not serve more than two consecutive terms.]

Programme of work and reports

7. The Committee shall adopt a programme of work, which should include estimates regarding its financial implications. The programme of work shall be subject to approval by the Conference of the Parties.

8. The Committee shall report regularly to the Conference of the Parties on its work, including at each of its sessions.

[8.bis The Chairperson shall be responsible for follow up of the work of the Committee between sessions and may rely on the assistance of members of the Bureau and ad hoc panels established by the Conference of the Parties.]

Liaison with scientific community and cooperation with international organizations

9. The Committee shall serve as a liaison between the Conference of the Parties and the scientific community. In carrying out its functions, it shall, in particular, seek the cooperation of, and utilize the services of and information provided by, competent bodies or agencies, whether national or international, intergovernmental or non-governmental.

10. The Committee shall keep itself informed of the activities of the scientific advisory bodies of other Conventions and of relevant international organizations, and shall coordinate its activities and cooperate closely with them to avoid duplication of work and optimize results.

Transparency of work

11. The results of the work of the Committee shall be in the public domain.

SECTION TWO

PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A ROSTER OF INDEPENDENT EXPERTS

I. DRAFT RECOMMENDATION TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Procedures for the establishment and maintenance of a roster of independent experts

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee,

Recalling its mandate to prepare for the first session of the Conference of the Parties pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/234 of 23 December 1994,

Recommends that the Conference of the Parties, at its first session, adopt the following decision:

Procedures for the establishment and maintenance of a roster of independent experts

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling article 24, paragraph 2, of the Convention, which provides that the Conference of the Parties shall establish and maintain a roster of independent experts with expertise and experience in the relevant fields, based on nominations received in writing from the Parties, taking into account the need for a multidisciplinary approach and broad geographical representation,

Having reviewed the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on the establishment of a roster of independent experts,

Decides to establish and maintain a roster of independent experts on the basis of the procedures attached to the present decision.

II. ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A ROSTER OF INDEPENDENT EXPERTS

Introduction

1. A roster of independent experts is hereby established in accordance with the provisions of article 24, paragraph 2, of the Convention. Its purpose is to provide the Conference of the Parties with an up-to-date list of independent experts in the various fields of specialization relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought, from which members of ad hoc panels may be selected.

Selection of experts to be included on the roster

2. Each Party may nominate experts on the roster, irrespective of their nationality, taking into account the need for a multidisciplinary approach and broad geographical representation. Nominees shall have demonstrated expertise and experience in fields relevant to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.

3. Nominations shall be communicated by the Parties to the Secretariat through diplomatic channels. In addition to the names of the experts, the communications shall include a reference to their field(s) of expertise, as well as their addresses.

4. Experts nominated by the Parties shall *ipso facto* be included on the roster.

5. Representatives of the Parties on the Committee on Science and Technology may not be nominated as experts on the roster.

6. Parties may make new nominations or withdraw previous nominations to the roster at any time by so notifying the Permanent Secretariat through diplomatic channels.

Disciplines to be represented

7. The roster of experts should reflect the diversity of knowledge and skills needed to provide advice on combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought, taking into account the integrated approach of the Convention and the expertise required to implement articles 16 to 19 of the Convention, including expertise from grassroots organizations and NGOs.

Review by the Conference of the Parties

8. The Conference of the Parties shall review the roster from time to time with a view to ensuring that the various areas of specialization and geographical areas are adequately represented.

Maintenance and transparency

9. The Permanent Secretariat shall maintain the roster, which shall be in the public domain.

SECTION THREE

PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AD HOC PANELS

I. DRAFT RECOMMENDATION TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Procedures for the establishment of ad hoc panels

The Intergovernmental Negotiating committee,

Recalling its mandate to prepare for the first session of the Conference of the Parties pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/234 of 23 December 1994,

Recommends that the Conference of the Parties, at its first session, adopt the following decision:

Procedures for the establishment of ad hoc panels

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling article 24, paragraph 3, of the Convention, which provides that the Conference of the Parties may, as necessary, appoint ad hoc panels to provide it, through the Committee on Science and Technology, with information and advice on specific issues regarding the state of the art in fields of science and technology relevant to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.

Having reviewed the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on the procedures for the establishment of ad hoc panels,

Decides to adopt the procedures attached to the present decision.

II. PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AD HOC PANELS

Introduction

1. The Conference of the Parties may, as necessary, appoint ad hoc panels to provide it, through the Committee on Science and Technology, with advice on specific issues regarding the state of the art in fields of science and technology relevant to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.

Terms of reference and modalities of work

2. The Conference of the Parties shall determine the terms of reference and modalities of work of each ad hoc panel, including its duration.

Composition and number of ad hoc panels

3. Ad hoc panels shall be composed of experts whose names are taken from the roster of independent experts, taking into account the need for a multidisciplinary approach and broad geographical representation. They shall have scientific backgrounds and field experience.

4. The Conference of the Parties shall determine the composition of each ad hoc panel according to the specific needs of each case and shall designate a coordinator from among members of the panel to conduct the work and prepare the report. The number of members of any ad hoc panel may be less than but shall not exceed twelve.

5. Every effort shall be made to ensure that the composition of the ad hoc panels reflects an appropriate gender balance as well as local and traditional knowledge and expertise.

6. There shall not be more than three ad hoc panels at any one time.

Reporting and transparency

7. Ad hoc panels shall report to the Conference of Parties, through the Committee on Science and technology. The Committee may not amend or revise the reports of ad hoc panels. However, it may comment or make recommendations based upon them.

8. Reports of ad hoc panels shall be in the public domain.